

Colossians

The City of Colossae

Colossae or Colosse, was an ancient city of Phrygia, on the Lycus, which is a tributary of the Maeander River. Phrygia was a Roman Province of Asia which today is Turkey. It was situated about 12 miles South East of Laodicea, and near the great road from Ephesus to the Euphrates.

Some sources distinguish Colossae from nearby Chonae or Kona now called Honaz, which they attribute to the middle Ages; others say these were successive names for the same city.

In 396 BC, during the Persian Wars, the satrap Tissaphernes was lured to Colossae and slain by an agent of the party of Cyrus the Younger. Pliny tells that the wool of Colossae gave its name (colossinus) to the color of the cyclamen flower. During the Hellenistic period, the town was of some mercantile importance, although by the 1st century it had dwindled greatly in size and significance.

It does not appear that St. Paul had visited this city when he wrote his Epistle to the Colossians (Colossians 1:2 Colossians 2:1), since he tells Philemon of his hope to visit it upon being freed from prison (Philemon 1:22). It seems that Epaphras was the founder of the Colossian church (Colossians 1:7 Colossians 4:12). (Wikipedia)

The Colossian Church

The apostle Paul had spent two years planting a church in Ephesus, and in Acts 19:10 we learn that, radiating from that center, “all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.” Whether Paul himself fanned out in missionary activity throughout the province or whether some of his converts did so, a church was planted in Colossae. It is likely that Epaphras founded the Colossian church (Colossians 1:7), and from Colossians 1:21 we assume that the church was composed mainly of Gentiles.

Philemon was a citizen of Colossae and an upright leader in that church. He also was a slave holder whose slave Onesimus had escaped, had later encountered the apostle Paul and had responded to the gospel message about Jesus. In the letter to the Colossians, Paul addresses how our relationship to God through Jesus Christ affects us in the workplace. Specifically, he writes about how slaves are to do their work for their masters and how masters are to treat their slaves. The short personal letter to Philemon extends our understanding of Paul’s command in Colossians 4:1.

The Purpose of the Letter

The letters to the Colossians and to Philemon are two of the four so-called “prison epistles,” believed to have been written by Paul from prison in Rome sometime circa 60-

62. At that time, Nero was the cruel and insane emperor of the Roman Empire who could ignore the claims of Paul's Roman citizenship.

From prison, Paul had heard that the Colossian Christians who had at one time been strong in their faith, were now vulnerable to deception about the faith (Colossians 2:4,8,16,18,21-23). He wrote to refute each of the theological errors the Colossians were tempted to embrace. The letters, however, take readers far beyond these issues of deception. Paul cared deeply that all of his readers (today as well as the Colossians two thousand years ago) understood the context of their lives within God's Story, and what that looks like in their relationships on the job. <http://www.theologyofwork.org/>

Historical and Theological Themes

There are several areas of theology taught in Paul's letter to the Colossians. Six of these key teachings are the Deity of Christ, (Colossians 1:15-20 Colossians 2:2-10) reconciliation, (Colossians 1:20-23) redemption, (Colossians 1:13-14 Colossians 2:13-14 Colossians 3:9-11) election, (Colossians 3:12) forgiveness, (Colossians 3:13) and the character of the Church. (Colossians 1:18, 24-25 Colossians 2:19 Colossians 3:11, 15). Heretical teaching was threatening the Colossian Church and Paul addresses this thought in Chapter 2.

The Challenge of Interpretation

There were cults within the Church that denied the deity of Christ. Their argument was based up the statement of Christ as "the firstborn of all creation." (Colossians 1:15). For these heretics this was proof that Jesus was a created being. Another problem was in Paul's statement that believers will be "holy and blameless and beyond reproach" if they "continue in the faith." (Colossians 1:22-23) This statement caused some to teach that a believer can lose his salvation. Some have even argued for the existence of purgatory based on Paul's words, "I do my share in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions." (Colossians 1:24) Others saw in this statement for baptismal regeneration. (Colossians 2:2) There has also been some misunderstanding on Paul's statement, "letter ... from Laodicea." (Colossians 4:16)

Outline

1. Personal Matters (Colossians 1:1-14)
 - A. Paul's Greeting (Colossians 1:1-2)
 - B. Paul's Thankfulness (Colossians 1:3-8)
 - C. Paul's Prayer (Colossians 1:9-14)
2. Doctrinal Instruction (Colossians 1:15 – 2:23)
 - A. About Christ Deity (Colossians 1:15-23)
 - B. About Paul's Ministry (Colossians 1:24 – 2:7)
 - C. About Paul's False Philosophy (Colossians 2:8-23)
3. Practical Exhortations (Colossians 3:1 – 4:18)
 - A. Christian Conduct (Colossians 3:1-17)

- B. Christian Households (Colossians 3:18 – 4:1)
- C. Christian Speech (Colossians 4:2-6)
- D. Christian Friends (Colossians 4:7-18)

Chapter 1

Verses 1-2

Paul begins this letter to the Colossians in the usual customary way of the day, it is also a salutation that was signature for all of Paul's letters to the Churches. In his opening he follows the three steps that was the custom of the day and the general way in which Paul greeted all those to whom he wrote. First Paul identifies himself as the author of the letter. Second Paul addresses the letter to those who he is writing to. And third Paul gives a short spiritual greeting of wishing grace and peace from the Father which he did in all 13 of his epistles.

Paul qualifies his authority by stating that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ. As an apostle Paul is a sent one, which is the meaning of the word apostle. Paul was sent by God to lead the Christian believers. An apostle leads the believers through the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Being an apostle is not something that a man may choose to do but it is a calling from God. God chooses His apostles. In Luke chapter 6 we read how Jesus spent the night in prayer to learn who He should choose as His apostles. On the Road to Damascus Jesus appeared to Paul and chose him to be an apostle for Jesus Christ. (Acts 9) in Acts 22:1-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-11) Paul gives a description how God chose him and therefore this letter, and the letters of Paul, are written with the authority of God.

Paul also identifies Timothy who was with Paul at the time he wrote this letter. Timothy had spent several years traveling with Paul and working in the mission with him. A few years later after this letter was written Paul wrote two letters to Timothy. (1&2 Timothy) Paul identifies Timothy our brother. This is a true statement as believers in Jesus Christ we are children of God. (John 1:12) We are all brothers and sisters through Christ as children of God who is our heavenly Father.

This letter is addressed to the saints at Colossae. Believers in Jesus Christ are to be separated from those who are living for this world. The word holy and saint have similar meaning and both mean to be separate. It means that the believer has left the old sinful ways that they used to live while in the world and are now seeking the righteous life of Jesus Christ. The saint no longer belongs to himself but has been purchased by the blood of God's Son Jesus Christ. Therefore the Saint has been redeemed and belongs to God. The saint is one who has been called to serve and worship God the Father almighty.

Grace is the unmerited favor that God shows towards his people. God shows his grace towards all people in that they receive gifts from Him regardless of their relationship with Him. All are given the day to live in, the sun shines on the unrighteous as well as the righteous, and so on. As believers in God through His Son Jesus, God displays a special grace even though they do not deserve it and cannot earn it. Grace then means that God

the Father is loving, kind and generous towards His children. This grace comes to the believer through Jesus. God will give the Christian all that is needed for the Christian life.

In the Hebrew language peace is shalom. This word was the traditional blessing throughout the Old Testament. (Numbers 6:24-26) This is still true today amongst the Jewish people. Peace is more than the opposite of war and noise. Peace is a calmness in the spirit that only God can give by a right relationship with Him. The peace of God effects every aspect of the Christians life and their relationships with other people. A person cannot have God's peace without God's grace.

Verses 3-8

As is always customary with Paul he expresses his thankfulness to God for the people who read his letters. Paul prayed for the Churches that he had visited, he prayed for the Churches that he had heard about, and he prayed for the Churches that he wrote to. In this letter the word we is inclusive of Timothy who was with him. Paul wrote this letter while imprisoned in Rome and Timothy was there with him as an aid to the ministry.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the full title ascribed to Him by Paul. The use of the word lord means that Jesus had complete authority from the Father. (Matthew 28:18) The New Testament was written in Greek, and the name "Jesus" here means the same in Greek as the Hebrew name "Joshua." "Joshua" means literally God is salvation. So the angel's message to Joseph was "You shall call His name 'God is salvation,' for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21) That name tells us of Jesus' purpose in God's plan which it is through Him that God saves humanity. The name Christ is a Greek word and in Hebrew the word is Messiah. Its meaning is that this is the one who God has anointed. To anoint is to mark a person in a special way as one to accomplish a special task. Often people were marked by the use of oil which was a sign that God had chosen that person for a special service. God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 10:38)

Epaphras was apparently visiting Ephesus and heard Paul's teaching while there. As a result he was saved and returned to his home in Colossae. When returning to his home Epaphras founded the Church in Colossae. Epaphras told Paul about the Christians in Colossae and it could mean that Paul himself had never visited the Church at Colossae. There are people who believe the facts about Jesus but do not follow Him in faith and therefore they do not change their behavior. The Christians of Colossae believed and trusted in Jesus and as a result they truly loved other Christians. Love is more than an emotion or physical desire for another person it is a spiritual concern for the welfare of others. In (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) Paul gives definition to what love is. Epaphras must have seen these qualities in the Christians at Colossae.

Epaphras taught the Christians in Colossae the true meaning of the gospel. The gospel is the good news about Jesus' victory over sin and death by his work on the cross. The gospel, the good news, is for all of mankind. God can forgive people of their sin because of the work that Jesus did on the cross. Jesus lived a perfect life and was the unblemished Lamb of God who was sacrificed upon the cross to take away the sin of the world. At the

writing of this letter to the Colossians false teachings had entered into the Church. Paul wrote this letter to remind the Christians at Colossae the true message of the gospel.

Epaphras

This Colossian is described in many ways. He was Paul's "fellow-servant" and "servant," his "fellow-prisoner," and a "faithful minister." He was also Paul's representative at Colossae where he had founded the church (Colossians 1:7), and sought under Paul's advice to combat prevalent heresies there. The apostle had affection for Epaphras, who ministered unto his need and the need of others.

It is in his prayer-ministry, however, that Epaphras is conspicuous. This giant in prayer knew how to lay all before the Lord, and laboring in secret, made the saints to be perfect and complete in their standing through his kneeling. He "strove earnestly in his prayers" for the Colossians. He wrestled in prayer that they might be perfect in the perfection of Christ, and "fully assured in all the will of God." Paul also testified to the perseverance as well as the prayers of Epaphras. He knew how to toil on behalf of the saints of God. He was practical as well as prayerful.

His prayers for the stability and maturity of others were numerous, continuous and strenuous. Epaphras brought to Paul at Rome a report of the Colossian Church where he had ministered in Paul's stead, an account that cheered his heart and resulted in the writing of the Colossian Epistle which Epaphras took back with him to his flock. Can we say that we are true successors of the devoted servant of God? Like him, do we know how to wrestle in agony of prayer? (Romans 15:30). Epaphras also manifested great zeal or properly "great labor of anxiety" for those under his care. Too few of us are concerned about the spiritual welfare of others. © 1988 Zondervan.

People who believe and trust in Jesus will come alive in their spirit. The Holy Spirit which indwells the believer brings new life to the Christian. Upon our departure and death in this world the spirit will live forever with God. The day is soon coming when Jesus will return to this world. (Acts 1:9-11) It is then that Jesus will take the Christians to live with Him in the home that He has prepared. (John 14:1-4) There are many good things that will happen for the Christian when they depart this world.

- They will be with Jesus in his glory. (Colossians 3:4)
- They will be like Jesus. (John 3:2)
- He will give them a new body for their new life, which will be in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:39-45)
- He will reward them for what they have done on earth. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)
- They will not die again. And they will not be sad or have any pain. (Revelation 21:4)

Jesus commanded His followers to take the message of the gospel to the uttermost parts of the world. (Acts 1:8) In this verse Paul did not mean that this had actually happened. Paul meant that the gospel message had travel to many places far from Israel and unto the known world. This work is still being done today as missionaries are carrying the

gospel message to every country in the world. As a result more and more people are becoming followers of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom is expanding.

It was not possible for Paul to visit every place himself. Just as it was not possible for Jesus to spread the message Himself and chose disciples to be sent to do the work for the harvest. So Paul had disciples also as we are commanded to go and make disciples. (Matthew 28:19) Epaphras was one of those disciples of Paul who came for Colossae. (Colossians 4:12) Paul referred to Epaphras as a servant of Christ. Because of the false teachings that had entered into the Church at Colossae Paul in this letter emphasized that Epaphras had taught them the truth about Jesus Christ. The proof that Paul states in the lives of the Christians in Colossae is the fruit of the Holy Spirit which is love. (Galatians 5:22-23) Christians cannot demonstrate the love of Christ unless the Holy Spirit is helping them. Some of these false teachers had been Jews so in this letter Paul refers to Jesus as the true Christ. Paul emphasizes that Jesus is the Messiah.

Titles of Christ

<i>Name or Title</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Biblical Reference</i>
Adam, Last Adam	First of the new race of the redeemed.	1 Corinthians 15:45
Alpha and Omega	The beginning and ending of all things	Revelation 21:6
Bread of Life	The one essential food	John 6:35
Corner Stone	A sure foundation for life	Ephesians 2:20
Chief Shepherd	Protector, sustainer, and guide	1 Peter 5:4
Firstborn from the Dead	Leads us unto resurrection and eternal life	Colossians 1:18
Good Shepherd	Provider and caretaker	John 10:11
Great Shepherd of the Sheep	Trustworthy guide and protector	Hebrews 13:20
High Priest	A perfect sacrifice for our sins	Hebrews 3:1
Holy One of God	Sinless in His nature	Mark 1:24
Immanuel (God With Us)	Stands with us in all of life's circumstances	Matthew 1:23
King of kings, Lord of lords	The Almighty, before whom every knee will bow	Revelation 19:16
Lamb of God	Gave His life as a sacrifice on our behalf	John 1:29
Light of the World	Brings hope in the midst of darkness	John 9:5

Lord of Glory	The Power and Presence of the living God	1 Corinthians 2:8
Mediator between God and Man	Brings us into God's presence redeemed and forgiven	1 Timothy 2:5
Only Begotten of the Father	The unique, one-of-kind Son of God	John 1:14
Prophet	Faithful proclaimer of the truths of God	Acts 3:22
Savior	Delivers from sin and death	Luke 1:47
Seed of Abraham	Mediator of God's covenant	Galatians 3:16
Son of Man	Identifies with us in our humanity	Matthew 18:11
The Word	Present with God at the Creation	John 1:1

Verses 9-14

As an apostles of Jesus Christ Paul had a deep concern for the Christians at the Church of Colossae. Here in these verses we hear the prayer of Paul for them. It would be a good prayer for each Church leader to pray for the flock that they lead.

The false teachers that had entered into the Church thought they had special knowledge and wisdom. It was then their purpose to teach this special knowledge and wisdom to the members of the Church at Colossae. But these false teachers did not believe in the true God and they were leading many Christians astray. Paul's approach was not to try to correct the false teachers but to remind the Christians about the truth of God. There are several places in this letter that Paul does this. In Paul's prayers he was praying that the Christians would learn more and more about God.

The knowledge of God is not an inner impression or feeling but a deep through knowledge of the will of God that is fully revealed in the word of God. This knowledge cannot be discovered by the people themselves. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches the Word of God. (Ephesians 1:17) God wants people to have a relationship with Him and to do this people must strive to know Him more and more. God wants everybody to hear the good news of the gospel that He can forgive sins. A person who knows God learns wisdom and understanding from the Holy Spirit. (James 3:13-18) Wisdom is the ability to accumulate and organize principles from scripture and understanding is the application of those principles to daily living.

If the Christian is led by the Holy Spirit then he learns to live in the right way. The Christian will know what God wants them to do. Christians who learn of Jesus and follow His teachings will begin to behave like Him. Paul tells them how the gospel is spreading and that it is producing fruit. Spiritual fruit is the by-product of living a righteous life. The Bible describes spiritual fruit as leading others to Christ. This is the role of the Christian to lead

others to Christ. (Matthew 28:18) This is our commission and command from Jesus. If the Christian truly loves Jesus then he will obey His Word. (John 14:15)

The Christian cannot please God unless God helps him by giving the Christian the power to live in the right way. (Philippians 4:13) As the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, (Genesis 1-2:3) God is all powerful. Jesus died on the cross for our sins but the power of God made Him alive again. (Ephesians 1:19-21) The Christian can have that same power in their life as they trust Jesus more and more each day. Being a Christian does not mean they will not have troubles in their life and most Christians will suffer for the sake of their faith in Jesus. (1 Peter 4:12-16) Paul knew the power of God in his life because he had received it. (Colossians 1:29) When God's people have this power they will have peace in their spirit. God wants the Christian to be steadfast and patient in their walk of faith. Patience has more to do with enduring the difficult circumstances in life and steadfastness looks to enduring difficult people.

In verses 9-11 we have described how God helps the Christian each day. Verses 13-14 reminds us what God has done for us in the past. In verse 12 we see the promises of the good things in the future. But none of this can be received without Christ. It is Christ who makes us holy so that we will be able to receive His gifts.

The Scriptures refer to light as God's divine truth. (Psalm 119:130) God lives in the light, God lives in truth, and the truth of God is too pure for us to be in the presence of God. God's light is too bright for us to look at. (1 Timothy 6:16) Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world.' When we trust him, we shall have his light in our lives (John 8:12).

Darkness is the opposite of light and refers to Satan and his deeds. Darkness also refers to time that people do not know God. Satan has power over the lives of people until they turn and trust Christ. The Kingdom means the place where Christ rules as the King of kings. When people are living in darkness are they under the rule of Satan and in his kingdom. When people turn and trust Jesus they are transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. Satan no longer sits on the throne of their lives as Jesus now sits there. Satan no longer has power over the Christians life. Christ now rules in their life. Christ has forgiven their sins and helps them to live holy lives. We can also read an explanation of this in Romans Chapter 6.

As mentioned before there were false teachings within the Church of Colossae. One of the heresy's threatening the Colossian Church was the denial of the deity of Christ. Paul combats this element of heresy with an emphatic defense of Christ's deity.

Nobody has seen God the Father because He is a Spirit. (John 1:18) We cannot see God because He does not have a physical body as we. Jesus said, **"Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"** (John 14:9) Jesus has the same nature and character as God so as we learn more of Jesus we learn more of God. Jesus was before the creation and has the honor over all that God has

created. Paul made emphases of this many times in his letter. Jesus existed before He had a physical body, as God created all physical things by means of Jesus.

He also created all things that are not physical and this includes angels and spirits. In this verse heavens refers to the expanse above us rather than the dwelling place of God. Christians believe that the heavenly host are the holy angels that serve God. But there are also evil angels and spirits that serve Satan. The false teachers worshiped the angels. (Colossians 2:18) The false teachers also believed that there were many ranks of angels and spirits. Paul list 4 of these ranks in the angels and spirits but this does not mean that Paul agreed with the false teaching. These four ranks are Thrones, Dominions, Rulers, and Authorities. The emphases of Paul in this letter is that Christ is greater than all the angels and spirits, as God in Christ created them. Jesus has power over them as they are creatures of His creation. God created everything for Christ and for this reason everything exists.

Through Christ all of creation remains on its true course. Christ maintains all that is physical. It has been said that if the sun, moon and stars varied even one degree from their course the universe would fail to exist. Christ also maintains everything that is not physical. Christ is the ruler of everything that He created.

Christ is also the head of the Church. The Church means all the Churches in all the world. The word Church does not refer to buildings or grounds but to the people who make up the congregation of the Church. Christ no longer lives in a physical body but lives in all the Christians by means of His Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:9-11) Today Christ lives on earth in His Church, the Christians. The body of Christ is His Church and He is the head, the ruler of His Church.

Others in the Bible have come back from the dead only to die again. Jesus was resurrected from the dead never to die again. Christ is the first born of the dead and has a new body. The Church began when Jesus became alive again and the Christians, Christ body, will have eternal life also because of Christ. Each Christian will receive a new body that will never die.

Jesus is referred as the God-Man. Jesus was fully man and He is fully God. God lived in Christ body and will continue to live in Christ forever. God put everything He had into Christ and put everything that He is into Christ. Christ was the fullness of God. (John 14:8-10)

Adam and Eve sinned because they did not obey God's Word. Because of this they no longer were friends of God and they became God's enemies. God sent them away from the Garden of Eden, the paradise He had created for them. Since that time everyone has sinned and sin separates man from God. Sin also affects the physical world that God had created. (Genesis 3) Christ's death also affects people and everything He created. One day the physical world will be free from the effects of sin. (Romans 8:19-21) One day there will be a New Heaven and a New Earth. (1 Peter 3:13) There will no longer be the effects of sin there.

Sin has caused God to be angry. (Ephesians 5:6) Sin brought death into the world just as God had warned Adam and Eve. (Romans 6:23) God sent His Son Jesus to live a perfect life and die on the cross to pay the sin debt of the world. Instead of God punishing us He punished His Son Jesus. Here Paul reminds the Christian of Colossae that Christ has made them clean from their sin. Through Christ they were holy in the eyes of God and therefore God is not angry towards the Christians. The Christians were not separate from God as through Christ the relationship between man and God had been restored. This is the Love of God that He has united people with Himself through His Son Jesus Christ. All of this is the good news of the gospel message.

This does not mean that everyone will be saved from the wrath of God. The Bible makes it very clear that many will refuse to become friends with God and will remain God's enemies.

The Christians had heard the true message of the gospel and they had believed it. Then they began to listen to the false teachings and fall away from the truth. In Paul's letter to the Colossians Paul urged the Christians to continue to believe in God's truth. The purpose of Paul's letter is to further explain the truth of the message of the gospel. Only the truth found in the gospel of Jesus Christ would cause Christianity to spread and produce good fruit.

Verses 15-20

One heresy that was threatening the Colossian Church was the denial of the deity of Christ. Here in these verses Paul combats this heresy with an emphatic defense of the deity of Jesus Christ. The purpose of Paul is that the more the Christian knows about Jesus the better he can defend his faith in Jesus.

In John 1:18 we read that no one has seen God the Father. That God the Father is a Spirit. We cannot see God because a Spirit cannot be seen by the physical eye. Jesus said that **"He who has seen Me has seen the Father."** (John 14:9) Jesus has the same nature and character as God. When we learn more about Jesus we also learn more about God. Jesus was before creation and God put Jesus in the position of honor over all of creation. Many times in this letter of Paul this truth is emphasized. Jesus is the first born of all creation. This verse here is the cause of some of the false teaching in the Colossian Church. The false teacher stated that Jesus was a created being. This view grew out of the misrepresentation of the use of the word firstborn. The Jewish hierarchy of the family gave the firstborn male the right to inheritance. In most cases this is true. This word in most cases refers to preeminence in position or rank. The word firstborn is used of Israel (Exodus 4:22 Jeremiah 31:9) but Israel was not the first nation but was the preeminent nation of God. Therefore, in this context firstborn means highest in rank, not first created. (Psalm 89:27 Revelation 1:5) Jesus existed before creation and is exalted above creation.

Jesus also existed before He had a physical body. All things physical were created by God through Jesus. God also created all things that are not physical through Jesus. This includes the angels and the spirits. Both God and Satan have angels as one third of the

heavenly host fell with Satan. (Revelation 12:4) The teachers of the false doctrine were also worshipping angels. This is something we are not to do as the angels are created beings also. (Revelation 22:8-9) They also believed that the angels had ranks and Paul listed four of these ranks. Thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities. Paul listed them in order to say that Jesus was greater and had authority over the angels. God through Jesus created the angels. Everything was created by God for Christ and Christ is the reason that everything exists.

The physical creation is held together by Christ. The sun, moon and stars maintain their course through the power of Christ. The universe is ordered by Christ and every day that we live is a gift made possible through Christ. Christ is also the creator and maintainer of the unphysical as well. Without the hand of Christ nothing would exist as He is the ruler of all His creation.

It was Christ that created the Church and He is the head of the Church. The believers in Christ, the Christians, are the body of Christ and He is the head of the body. Christ lives in the body of His Church by means of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:9-11) Christ lives and rules here on earth in His Church the Christians.

Jesus died on the cross but rose again from the dead and is alive this day and forever more. There are some people in the Bible who died and became alive again. (2 Kings 4:32-37 John 11:38-44) But they were only resuscitated but Jesus was resurrected and will never die again. Christ was the first to become permanently alive again and was given a new body, a glorified body. The beginning of the Church of God was when Jesus was risen from the dead. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians that Christians will also become permanently alive again because of Jesus Christ. The Christian also will receive a glorified body.

Jesus was not just a man but also He was God. God lived through Jesus' human body and continues to live through Christ forever. God put all that He had into His Son Jesus Christ. God placed His character, nature and power into Christ and He was full of God the Father. (John 14:8-10) No part of God was missing from the life of Christ. (Colossians 2:9)

Verses 20-23

Adam and Eve disobeyed God's Word and therefore sinned against God. As a result they were no longer friends of God as the fellowship had been broken by their sin. They became enemies of God and therefore God sent them away. Everyone bears the sin of Adam and Eve as well as their own sin. This sin in man separates us from God. Not only man is affected by sin but also the physical world as well. (Genesis 3) The atoning work of Christ on the cross affects people and it also affects the physical world too. Someday the physical world will be free from the effects of sin. (Romans 8:19-21) There is a new heaven and a new earth ahead in the future. (1 Peter 3:13)

God is righteously angry about the sin in the world. (Ephesians 5:6) As God had warned Adam that sin causes death. (Romans 6:23) God sent His Son Jesus into the world to live a righteous life, a life without sin. Jesus died on the cross as the Lamb of God, a perfect sacrifice for our sin. The wage of sin is death but God did not punish us but punished His Son for our sin. Paul reminded the Christians at Colossae that Christ died on the cross to take away their sin and to redeem them. Jesus had made the Christian

holy unto God, separated from the world. God is no longer angry at the Christians as they are not enemies to God. The fellowship the Christian has been restored with God through Jesus Christ. This is the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This does not mean that everyone will be saved from the wrath of God. The Scriptures make it clear that many people will refuse the free gift of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. They will remain God's enemies.

The Christians of Colossae had heard the true message of the gospel and they had believed it. False teachers had entered into the Church and they had begun to believe what they were teaching. Paul was urging them to return to the true message of God. Paul wrote this letter to the Church at Colossae to give a redefinition of the message of God. Paul, and other Christians, preached the true gospel in all areas around the known world. Only the true gospel message would cause Christians to continue to spread and produce the good fruit.

Verses 24

Christ had suffered and died upon the cross for the purpose of the forgiveness of sin. The work of Christ on the cross was complete. (John 19:30) The meaning of this verse is not that Christ has to suffer again for the sin of the world. When the Christian suffers the Lord Jesus Christ suffers with them. Paul used to persecute the Christians and by doing so he hurt the Lord Jesus Christ as well. (Acts 9:4) Paul wrote this letter while in prison and was suffering because he preached the gospel message of Jesus. Paul was not discouraged as he was happy to preach the gospel for Christ.

The Secret of the Good News

In Paul's letters, the word secret (sometimes translated mystery) is applied to the Good News. Sometimes secret is used as an abbreviation for the Good news itself. (Colossians 2:2 Colossians 4:3 1 Corinthians 2:1 Ephesians 1:9 Ephesians 6:19) Frequently, as in Colossians 1:26, Paul claims that the secret had been hidden in the past but now has been revealed. (Romans 16:25 I Corinthians 2:7 Ephesians 3:9) Paul does not mean by this that the Good News is a secret that has to be probed. He adapts the term from Jewish apocalyptic teaching. (the term apocalyptic is from a Greek word that means "uncovering" or "revelation"; the same word is used as the name for the book Revelation) In the apocalyptic perspective, the plan God has mapped out for all of history already exist in His mind but is hidden from human eyes until God chooses to disclose it. For Paul, the secret plan has now been disclosed in Christ, and is broadcast through the word by His apostles.

Through the Old Testament prophets, God foretold many elements of the Good News, but He kept some aspects of it hidden until He revealed them in the New Testament era. These include the full participation of Gentiles as fellow-heirs with Jews: (Colossians 1:27 Ephesians 3:1-9) the indwelling of Christ in believers (Colossians 1:27 Colossians 2:2); and the union of Christ and the Church, as illustrated by the union of husband and wife. (Ephesians 5:32) But some elements of God's plan are still hidden and await further revelation, such

as the salvation of all Israel (Romans 11:25) and the transfiguration of Christians at the time of Christ return. (1 Corinthians 15:51)

Verses 25-27

Paul served the Church of God as an Apostle. Ephesians 4:11-13 tells us how an apostle served in the Church. Paul here declares that he had given the Church in Colossae the complete message about the gospel. The Church there did not need the secret information that the false teachers pretended to possess. The past message from God was complete and the Jews had that message in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament some of God's plan was revealed to them. Their interpretation was that God's plan was only for the Jew. The complete plan of God was made known when Jesus Christ came. The mystery was that Christ lives in the Gentile Christian and the Jewish Christian. (Ephesians 3:7-12) At the second coming of Christ every Christian will live with Him and share in His glory.

There are five parts of this mystery that we can look at. The truth of this mystery include the incarnate God, (Colossians 2:2-3,9) Israel's unbelief, (Romans 11:25) lawlessness, (2 Thessalonians 2:7) the unity of the Jew and the Gentile made one in the Church, (Ephesians 3:3-6) and the rapture of the Church. (1 Corinthians 15:51)

Verses 28-29

Paul's message was that of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul also taught Christians how to grow in their spiritual maturity. Paul did not want them to remain stagnate. (Hebrews 5:11 Hebrews 6:3) The false teachers in the Church had said that they had secret wisdom and power. True wisdom that comes from God helps every Christian and enables them to know Christ more.

Chapter 2

In Chapter 2 Paul addresses particular things that the false teachers were teaching and he also explains the superiority of Jesus Christ.

Verses 1-5

Paul's letter to the Colossians was also in part to the Church at Laodicea. Laodicea was about 16 kilometers west of Colossae, which was about 10 miles. Therefore this letter was written to the Christians in both of these Churches. (Colossians 4:16) Jesus issued a warning to the Church in Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-22.

Paul's work was to help each Christian to grow in spiritual maturity. (Colossians 1:28) Mature Christians in each Church would also bring the whole Church to a greater spiritual maturity. In Colossians 1:4 Paul had praised the Christians for their love for other Christians thus uniting them. Paul also wanted them to know and believe the complete truth about Jesus Christ. There was no need for the secret wisdom and knowledge that the false teachers had claimed to have. The false teacher's motive may have been that they wanted to be viewed as an elite group of teachers within the body of the Church. Paul states that all they need to know came to them through Christ. Thus they should be encouraged as they gain in trust of Christ.

A person who is solid in the truth will be able to recognize a lie and able to see anything that is false. The false teachers within the Church were very clever in the way that they taught these false doctrines. These teachers were very persuasive in their teachings and wanted the people to believe them. Therefore, it was very important to Paul that the Christians at Colossae firmly knew the truth of Jesus Christ that they could discern what was false.

“My spirit is with you” was Paul’s way of letting them know that he cared deeply for them and that they were in his prayers. Paul gave them his praise because they still believed the truth. Discipline and firm are words that a soldier would use and this is the terminology that Paul used to express that they were soldiers for Christ. Christians are the soldiers of Christ who oppose Satan and that Satan is the father of lies. (John 8:44) If the Christian knows the truth, then it is easier for him to oppose the lie.

Verses 6-7

The Christians at Colossae had started the walk in their faith in Jesus in the right way. Jesus had become the Master of their lives. Paul did not now want them to become misled by false teachings.

Paul uses the picture of a tree in this verse. A tree grows roots that fix it into the ground. The deeper and stronger the roots the less possibility that the tree can be uprooted. The storms cannot blow the deep rooted tree over. A Christian must fix his life into Christ. People build their houses on a strong level base or foundation. A Christian who builds his life on Christ will be built on a strong level foundation. Jesus taught this in Matthew 7:24-27. Epaphras had taught the Colossians about Christ and Paul was urging them to continue to believe the truth.

The Christians life should be one of praise and gratitude towards God for what He has done for them through Christ.

Verses 8-15

We now have Paul’s explanation of why the false teachers were wrong. Paul warns them not to become captive to the false teachings of the world. These false teachers thought the people had to obey many rules. But the truth of Christ is that we are free from the law through grace. (John 8:31-32, 36) Philosophy can refer to human wisdom and thinking. But it is more than merely the academic discipline, but describes any theory about God, the world, or the meaning of life. Any wisdom without Christ is a false wisdom. People’s traditions may seem to be good and wise but often are used to control people. Traditions depend on the ideas of humans and are founded on human wisdom. They are not founded on the wisdom of God. Basic principles refers to the evil spirits of this world. Many people believed that the spirits ruled this world and some people even worshiped them.

In verse 9 Paul repeats Colossians 1:9 that God had filled Christ and that God is the only true God. Therefore, Christ is superior to everything that Paul had stated in verse 8.

The false teachers had nothing that the Christians at Colossae needed. The Christian already has all that is needed through Christ. God fills the Christian with His nature and power. Christ is the ruler of all creation and of every spirit and angel. (Colossians 1:16 Colossians 2:15) For this reason Christians should not worship spirits.

Every Jewish male was marked by circumcision as a link to God's promise to all the Jews. (Genesis Chapter 17) If the Gentile wanted to become a Jew then the Jews would circumcise him. Circumcision was not always physical in the Old Testament as sometimes it referred to a circumcision in the heart. (Deuteronomy 30:6) When a Jew or a Gentile becomes a Christian Christ circumcises them by removing the old nature. Christ makes them free from the power of their old nature.

In the New Testament new Christians were baptized as soon as they became Christians. (Acts 2:38-42) They went down by the riverside or found a deep pool of water. The new Christians fully immersed themselves and then came back up. The water was as a grave in which they buried the old nature and rose up from the water with Christ's new life in them. This was an outside act which showed what had taken place on the inside. Christ had died and then rose from the grave and at the Christian's baptism they joined in Christ experience. In Paul's letter to the Romans more is explained about baptism. (Romans 6"1-10)

Here in verses 13 being dead means that our transgressions had separated us from God. (Ephesians 2:12) God is holy, separated from man in that God is perfectly righteous. We cannot approach God in our sinful state. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, because Jesus paid the sin debt for all the world, God is able to forgive those who place their faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. We have to first accept God's free gift of salvation through the work of Jesus on the cross and ask God for His forgiveness. Once we are forgiven we are seen by God in the righteousness of His Son Jesus and places the Holy Spirit in each Christian's life. (Ephesians 1:13)

In those days the form of capital punishment was to cross. The cross was a large wooden pole placed in the ground with a cross beam near the top. They nailed the criminal to the cross by putting nails through his wrist. They would also nail his feet to the bottom portion of the wooden pole. The Romans would also nail a sign on the cross stating the crimes that the criminal was being punished for. The criminal would be left hanging on the cross until he was dead.

God established His law in the Old Testament. God is Holy and can only accept people that are also holy. No one is able to obey God's law and therefore sin and the punishment for sin is death. (Romans 6:23) God sent His only begotten Son into the world to live as a man. Jesus lived a perfect life completely obedient to the will of the Father. In spite of Christ living a sinless life God put the record of our sins onto the cross of Jesus. Jesus bore the guilt of all our sins and we received the record of His perfect righteous life. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The evil powers and authorities are those under control of Satan and his wicked angels. Christ never gave into Satan and obeyed God His Father completely. Satan is unable to accuse Jesus of any sinful act. Satan is but a fallen angel and has no power over Jesus but Jesus as a deity and ruler of creation has power over Satan.

In the Old Testament there were laws of God that told people what they should eat or drink. God also made laws about what people should not eat. God also made special holy holidays that the people were to observe. (Leviticus 23) God created the heavens and the earth in six days and on the seventh day He rested. The Jewish are to rest on the seventh day which is called the Sabbath. (Genesis 2:2-3) The Pharisees added hundreds of extra laws to God's law. The false teachers in the Colossian Church told the Christians that they must obey these laws also. The False teachers told the Christians that this would make them better Christians. Paul taught that the false teachers were in error. In Mark 7:19 Jesus said the laws about food had come to an end. Paul also wrote to the Galatians because they too had started to obey the false teachers.

Legalism

At the time of Christ and the early Church, Jews made much of rules and laws in their understanding of religion. This was natural to them because God has given His law to the Jewish people as a mark of His favor upon them and as a way for them to ratify the covenant agreement He had made with them. However, many Jews added to the laws that God had given to His people, trying to develop rules for every situation in which they might find themselves. Their motivation was often a positive desire not to transgress any of God's laws. As Jesus often pointed out, however, the rules developed by Rabbi sometimes became obstacles to obeying God's rules. (Mark 7:1-15) Furthermore, many Jews thought that following the law would automatically endear them to God. Paul apparently confronted a situation of this kind in Colossians 2:16-23. False teachers, influenced by Jewish beliefs, were insisting that Christians follow certain rules as a way of expressing their faith. Paul criticized this in light of faith in Christ. As the culmination of all God's plans and purposes, Christ is the center of all true piety. This does not mean that rules for conduct are inherently bad. Some rules, such the prohibition on lying (Colossians 3:9) clearly manifest an aspect of Christ character. Paul also had no problem with individual

Christians imposing rules on themselves that they thing are conducive to their own growth in Christ. (Romans 14:5 1 Corinthians 8) But they must not require others to obey these self-imposed rules.

Verses 16-23

The Old Testament law demonstrated to the Jew the right way to live their life. The Old Testament law reminded the Jews that God was Holy. The laws of the Old Testament did not give the Jews the power to live a holy life. However, every Christian can live a holy life through Jesus Christ. The Old Testament laws were good but Christ is superior to the laws. The laws showed people how to live in God's way but Christ actually lived in God's

way. Christ gives His power to all that will trust Him. The Christian does not need law but only to trust Christ.

In Exodus 20 God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. The first one of these commandments say that we should not worship anyone or anything except God. But some people in Colossae were worshipping the angels. These people also said that they had received special spiritual experiences and they thought they were superior to all the others.

In Colossians 1:18 Paul referred to Christ as the head of the body. The Body of the Church which is its members. The false teachers were teaching the people were not good enough and they needed to add extra things in order to be real Christians. Paul stated that the false teachers were not real Christians at all. A true Christian has everything that he needs through Christ. It is Christ that gives life to His Church and the false teachers had separated themselves from Christ. Therefore, they could not be part of Christ's body, the Church.

Paul did not state that all rules are bad but did say that the rules the false teachers were making were of no spiritual value. The rules that the false teachers were making were so they could control what the people were doing. These rules dealt with outer behavior. Christ makes people different because He changes the inside, He strips off the old sinful nature.

Chapter 3

Verses 1-4

Colossians 2:9-15 explained to the Christians at Colossae what happened in their baptism and now Paul will explain how they should live this new life in Christ. As we look to the things that are above we are looking to Christ and the things of the spiritual realm. The new life that the Christian has is found in Christ and therefore Christ should be the center of the Christians life. God the Father has given all power and authority to Christ and He rules this world as He rules in Heaven. The Christian should discover what pleases Christ as this is pleasing to God.

The things that are of the earth are the things of the old life before Christ became the center. The things that are of the earth are also what people try to gain and possess of the world. People want power and they want honor and they want all they can receive from the world in order to please themselves. The Christians old life in the flesh has died with Christ on the cross and the focus is not to please themselves but to glorify God and please Him. The desire of the Christian is the relationship with Christ more than anything or anyone else. Some teachers do not understand this verse and believe that the world and our lives are evil. They teach that the Christian should not enjoy the physical things of this world. We must remember that God created all physical things of this world and as Christians we should also enjoy the creation that God has given us. (Genesis 1:27-31 1 Timothy 4:4-5) Christians can have a full life by concentrating of Christ. The Christian

should not concentrate on this world but on the world that we are truly though Christ we are part of, the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 6:25-34)

This world and our physical lives are passing away. (1 Corinthians 7:29-31) Everything here in the world is temporary. All will pass away as the world must be, as the Christian, born again. When Christ returns all things will become new. The things the Christian can have that is permanent are the things from above. The Christian has a new life through Christ which is not physical but spiritual. Today the Christian is still living in their physical tent, the flesh, but when Christ returns the Christian will be able to see in their spiritual life. Every Christian will receive glory from Christ as we will be as He is. (1 John 3:2) Today the Christian should pursue the things of above and not the things of this world.

Having a hidden life with Christ in God is an expression with a threefold meaning. First, the Christian has a common spiritual life with the Father and Son. (1 Corinthians 6:17 2 Peter 1:4) This spiritual life the Christian has is beyond the understanding of the world to see the full import of the Christians new live through Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:14 1 John 3:2) Christians live in the eternal security of God and are protected from all spiritual enemies and have access to all of God's spiritual blessings. (John 10:28 Romans 8:31-29 Hebrews 7:25 1 Peter 1:4)

Verses 5-11

Through the Christians concentration on Christ they learn to live a holy life. The Christian is not immediately perfect but becomes perfect through sanctification. Christians receive a new nature but still have old habits that must be forsaken. The old nature died with Christ but evil desires still tempt the Christian. (James 1:13-15) The Christian must discipline himself to refuse to obey their evil desire. (Romans 8:1-14)

Sex was created by God for a man and his own woman that they may live as one flesh and be fruitful. All other sex is evil. People confuse love and lust, lust is the desire for evil sexual relations. Greed is a desire to satisfy one's own self. Their all kinds of things that people can be greedy for. Some are greedy for food, money, power, honor, and they pursue their own pleasure rather than pursuing Christ.

The world is full of false gods. A false god is anything that become between man and God. If we allow the desires of this world to become a distraction to our desire for Christ that distraction becomes a false god in our lives. A Christian must set aside all this wrong behavior. They discipline themselves to control their desires for evil. The Christian cannot live under the control of evil and under the control of Christ. (Mathew 6:24)

Sin destroys people's lives. The wage for our sin is death and death reigns in sin. (Romans 5:21 Romans 6:23) Sin comes between man and a Holy righteous God and for this reason God sent His Son to die on the cross to settle the debt of sin. This is a reason for God's anger for sin. In Romans 2:1-6 we learn how God will judge sin in the future. In Verse 5 Paul reminded the Colossians about the sinful living of their past but now they are to live in their new life.

Christians are to love their neighbor as they love themselves. (Matthew 19:19) The Christian is responsible for their behavior towards other people. Our motivation in relationships is the love that God has given us. (1 John 4:8,13) Christians must behave not as they used to but as Christ.

Paul gives a list of bad behavior that the Christian must put off. The Christian must put off anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive speech. These bad behaviors can hurt the spirits of other people. Neither can a Christian lie as Jesus said, "I am the truth" so Christians must speak in truth. (John 14:6)

The Christian is to take off their old nature and put on their new nature. Here Paul is using a picture of how someone takes off their dirty clothes and puts on clean clothes. We are to evolve into the image of Christ. We learn by our study of God's Word, which is Jesus. (John 1:1) In order for the Christian to know how to behave he needs to study what Jesus taught. As Christians grow in their love for Christ they desire to be more like Him. Christians want to obey Him and please Him. Jesus said that if we love Him then we will keep His commandments. (John 14:15) The Christian is given the Holy Spirit to dwell in them and the Spirit helps the Christian to control themselves. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Though the spread of the gospel there are Christians from all parts of the world. None of the differences between the cultures of people in the world matters to God for they all are His creation. As a Christian all are equal in the eye of God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." (John 3:16) Christians have Christ dwelling within them and must behave in the right way towards other Christians.

Verses 12-21

Paul reminds the Christians at Colossae of what God has done for them. It is through Christ that they belong to God. This is the reason that Christians should act in the right behavior. Paul gives a list of the attributes that a Christian should have. The Christian is to put on the heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. The Christian is to bear with one another and be forgiving towards one another. These are the attributes of Christ and in this way the Christian can become more like Christ.

Having a heart of compassion means that we have a deep concern about other people. The Christian should show kindness towards others and help them whenever they can. Humility is the antidote to self-love. Humble people do not think of themselves as better than someone else. Christians with a humble heart know that every person is of equal value to God. Humble people pray and hope for the success of every Christian's walk of faith. Some people think of gentleness as a weakness. The truth is that gentle people know how to control their strength. Patient people know how to control their temper. They are able to remain calm when others annoy them. Patient people can wait a long time for someone to do something or to display a correct behavior.

As Christians we may not like the way that others Christians behave. Sometimes this evolves into quarrels or fights. If a Christian has no forgiveness in their heart they will start to hate each other. This is wrong. Christians instead should be patient with the faults of

others. They should keep in friendship and not become enemies. Christ is the model that the Christian should follow. People did many wrong things to Jesus, they even killed Him. But Christ forgave them. (Luke 23:34) Christ was able to do this because He trusted God and knew that God was a fair judge. (1 Peter 2:21-24) We can read the reasons for forgiving from Jesus in Matthew 6:9-15 and Matthew 18:21-35.

Paul describes the new nature that the Christian is to have. We are to put on love. By putting on love it is like putting on a coat on top of all the other qualities. Each one of the qualities of verses 12-13 comes as people love one another. This bond of love for each other unites people together. In Matthew 22:36-40 Jesus teaches that the most important law is to love God and the second is to love one another.

If the Christians at Colossae should put on the qualities that Paul has described then the Church (The body of Christ) will not fight or argue with each other. Peace will abide in a Church that has love towards each member. Christ will bring His peace into every situation when Christians obey Him. We should always be in gratitude for what Christ has done for us.

The message of Christ is powerful and will change the lives of people. Being filled by His Spirit will affect every part of our lives. Another gift of Christ is that he gives us His wisdom and the Christians are enabled to teach one another through His wisdom. Christians should also hold each other accountable to God as this helps them to become mature in their spiritual walk. The Christian should praise God because Christ has done so much for them.

The book of Psalms is a group of praises to God in the Old Testament. Christians can use these Psalms to praise God when they are together or when they are alone. Christians can also praise God with the use of all types of instruments and singing. Or the Christian can just sing his praises to God.

A person's name becomes a representation of who they are. As a Christian we are representatives of Christ and His Kingdom. Just as what we do reflects on the identity of our name, as a 'Christian what we do reflects on the name of Christ.

The wife is to be subject her husband as he is the head of the household just as the Church is to be subject to Christ as He is the head of the Church. The Husband is to love their wives. This is not the mere love as the world loves but the highest form of love that comes from God the Father. The Children are to be obedient to the parents in all things. The only exception to this is when the parent demands something in opposition to God's Word. The coming to the Lord in some instances can be viewed by the parent as disobedience. Therefore, the child can disobey if it is according to the will of God. Fathers are not to provoke their children as this will be harmful to their children's spirit.

Verses 22-25

In the ancient world slavery was an accepted practice and important to the economy of that time. The New Testament never attacks the establishment of slavery as such. Slaves

are to be obedient to their masters even when the masters are not present. Slaves are to serve their masters honestly because this is also respectful to the Lord. Rather we are slave or free we all serve a higher Master who is always with us and watching.

In whatever we do we are to work diligently and be eager towards our work. We may be under the authority of a master or employer but we are truly working for the Lord. We may be fairly or unjustly compensated for our effort but the Lord ensures that the believer will receive fair compensation for his efforts. (Revelation 20:12-13) The Christian cannot justify disobedience by their faith. (Philemon 1:18) God deals with obedience and disobedience impartially. (Galatians 6:7)

Chapter 4

Verse 1

Employers of this day are as the masters of slaves in the ancient times and must treat their employees justly. The employer or the master will be held accountable to the Master Jesus Christ one day. (Romans 3:19) The Christians should treat all people fairly as our Master in heaven treats all people with dignity and grace.

Verses 2-4

Prayer is fundamental to the life of the Christian. (Ephesians 6:18 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18) It is the work of the Holy Spirit that teaches the Christians how to pray. (Romans 8-26-27) The Importance of prayer is not only for our own petitions but for the cares and concerns for others. The Christian must approach God for what He is the Creator who is All Powerful, All Knowing and Ever-present. As great as God is He is a personal God to each and every one. We must always remember to approach Him with a thankful heart. (Psalm 100:4) Paul has reminded the Christian in this letter several times to be thankful towards God. (Colossians 1:2 Colossians 2:7 Colossians 3:15 Colossians 3:17) Paul gives us a good example at the beginning of his letter to the Colossians **"We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you."** (Colossians 1:3) The Christian is to devote themselves to prayer which means to be persistent or to hold fast and not let go of our praying to God. (Luke 11:5-10) A Christian is to stay alert for the specific needs about which to pray. (Luke 21:36) The Christian is also to be watchful and on the alert for the time of Our Saviors return is near. (Matthew 24:42)

In Paul's letters he often asked for Christians to pray for him. (Romans 15:30-32 Ephesians 6:19-20 2 Thessalonians 3:1) Paul's missionary trips gave him many opportunities to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. But Paul often found opposition from the Jews and their rulers because they did not like the message that Paul preached. As a result of this Paul now at the writing of this letter was in prison in Rome. (Acts 28) Paul was asking that the Christians in Colossae pray for us, probably meaning him and Timothy, (Colossians 1:1) and Epaphras (Colossians 1:7) and others who helped him. Paul now unable to visit other places because of his imprisonment wrote letters and today, as well as then, Christians benefit from his work. Paul wanted the mystery of the Gospel of Christ to be clearly understood.

Verses 5-6

The people of the world do not know Christ and the Christians work and live in the midst of the people of the world. As Christians, Ambassadors of His Kingdom, (2 Corinthians 5:20) the Christian should understand how they should behave. (Colossians 1:9-11) The Christian should not show their old nature but the new nature they have through Christ. Through the world opposes the Christian they do watch and listen to the ways of the Christian. Christians should be evolving into the image of Christ and people should be able to see Christ in the Christian. The Christian is to develop the same attributes as Jesus. (Ephesians 4:29-32) Then as Christians speak about what Christ means to them people will be more willing to listen.

The Rabbis often referred wisdom to salt. Paul may have been using this same inference here as saying the Christian should always speak wisely. Salt is also a seasoning which enhances the flavor of the food that is eaten. Some foods can be dull without seasoning. The message of the gospel of Christ is not dull as Christians should speak the message in an interesting way. People who have developed an interest in Christ will ask questions and the Christian must always be ready to defend the faith. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

Paul has now taught everything he wanted the Colossians to hear and closes his letter with various personal greetings.